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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the status of special education for mentally and physically handicapped children in Japan. Among the topics covered are these: (1) placement of students with "heavy" handicaps in special schools; (2) more mainstreamed placement of children with "light" handicaps; and (3) enforcement by prefectural and municipal governments of school attendance. A series of charts depicts the numbers of special schools and handicapped children attending special schools (for the blind, deaf, physically handicapped, health impaired, and mentally retarded); numbers of special classes in normal schools and handicapped children attending special classes; conditions of school attendance of pupils and students in the stage of compulsory education; and numbers of schools and pupils in special schools and in special classes in normal schools. Classification considerations for blind, deaf, mentally retarded, physically disabled, and "sickly" students are outlined. A chart illustrating procedures regarding school attendance concludes the paper. (CL)

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Special Education in Japan

I. Japan's education for mentally and physically handicapped children is carried out according to the types and degrees of handicaps of those children. Children with comparatively heavy handicaps receive education at special schools (Special schools are composed of three types of schools, namely schools for the blind, schools for the deaf and schools for the otherwise handicapped.), while children with comparatively light handicaps receive education at special classes set up in normal schools or regular classes in normal schools. Among those handicapped children, children who are considered likely to need education conducted at special schools are assessed against the standardized degrees of mental and physical deficiencies of the blind, the deaf or the mentally retarded, the physically disabled or the sickly as prescribed in Article 22-2 of The Order for Enforcement of the School Education Law. Children whose degrees of mental and physical deficiencies come under those prescribed in Article 22-2 of the above-mentioned Cabinet Order are obliged to attend special schools as provided for under The School Education Law. In cases where school-age children are unable to receive school education owing to their invalidism or imcomplete development of mind and body, measures are taken in order to allow those children a temporary or total exemption from the obligation to attend school.

II. It is considered very important that instructions concerning school attendance for handicapped children requiring special education are appropriately enforced. This enforcement is carried out by the education boards set up respectively in the prefectural and municipal governments. As is shown in the attached paper concerning the procedure for the instructions concerning school attendance from the administrative viewpoint, basically, the education board of the municipal government takes the following steps.

(1) to conduct the health examination prior to the start of compulsory school attendance for children who will attain school age in the next year.

(2) to grasp the growth history, the present mental and physical condition, and so forth of the handicapped children screened, based upon the result of the above-mentioned health examination

(3) to judge the degrees of the mental and physical deficiencies of the handicapped children based upon the advice of the Municipal Committee for Instructions concerning School Attendance which is composed of doctors, school teachers, professors and welfare facilities staff, etc. and decide on the actual school attendance (namely special schools or not) for the handicapped children.

EC 162 188

(4) to notify the prefectural education board of the list of the handicapped children whose degrees of mental and physical deficiencies come under Article 22-2 in the Cabinet Order of The School Education Law.

The prefectural education board makes a final decision concerning the school attendance of the above-mentioned handicapped children based upon the advice of the Prefectural Committee for School Attendance.

(Each prefectural government is obliged to establish and operate special schools for handicapped children as provided for under The School Education Law.)

(1) Number of special schools and handicapped children attending special schools

(National, Public and Private)

(as of May 1st, 1981)

		Number of schools	Number of children attending special schools				
			Kindergarten Div.	Primary Div.	Lower Secondary Div.	Upper Secondary Div.	Total
Schools for the blind		schools 72	persons 186	persons 1,813	persons 1,273	persons 4,558	persons 7,830
Schools for the deaf		110	2,250	3,327	2,261	3,470	11,308
Schools for the otherwise handicapped	Schools for the mentally retarded	428	51	22,289	14,615	9,800	46,755
	Schools for the physically handicapped	175	133	10,039	5,456	4,586	20,214
	Schools for the health impaired	92	3	4,551	2,895	513	7,962
	Sub-total	695	187	36,879	22,966	14,899	74,931
Total		877	2,623	42,019	26,500	22,927	94,069

(2) Number of special classes in normal schools and handicapped children attending special classes

(National, Public and Private)

(as of May 1st, 1981)

	Number of classes	Number of children
	classes	persons
Primary School	14,622	75,961
Lower Secondary School	6,689	35,393
Total	21,311	111,354

* Special classes are set up in normal schools for the partically sighted, mentally retarded, physically handicapped, and those with hearing difficulties, speaking impediments, emotional problems or of constitutionally impaired health.

(3) Conditions of school attendance of pupils and students in the stage of compulsory education (6 to 15 years old)

(as of May 1st, 1981)

Total number of children receiving compulsory education	persons 17,294,825	100.0 %
Number of handicapped children attending special schools (A)	68,519	0.4 %
Number of handicapped children attending special classes (B)	111,354	0.6 %
Number of handicapped children receiving special education (A + B)	179,873	1.0 %
Number of children allowed a temporary or total exemption from the obligation to attend school	2,319	0.01 %

(4) Present conditions concerning special schools at the level of compulsory education and special classes in normal schools (National, Public and Private)

Types			Number of schools (classes)	Number of pupils and students
Special Schools	Schools for the blind		68 schools	3,086 persons
	Schools for the deaf		100	5,588
	Schools for the otherwise handicapped	Schools for the mentally retarded	414	36,904
		Schools for the physically handicapped	173	15,495
		Schools for the health impaired	92	7,446
		Sub-total	679	59,845
	Total		847	68,519
Primary and Lower Secondary Schools	Special class	Mentally retarded	16,663	87,499
		Physically handicapped	387	1,595
		Health impaired	652	4,274
		Partially sighted	81	301
		Hard of hearing	467	2,005
		Speech disordered	1,265	7,451
		Emotionally disturbed	1,796	8,229
		Total	21,311	111,354
Grand Total				179,873

(5) The average composition of the members of the committee for instructions concerning school attendance

(As of October 1st, 1980)

Classification	Doctor	Teacher	Professor and Researcher, etc.	Welfare facilities staff	Others	Total
Prefectural level	8 persons	11	2	4	4	29 persons
Municipal level	2 persons	9	-	1	3	15 persons

Article 22-2

The degrees of mental and physical deficiencies of the blind, the deaf or the mentally weak, the physically disabled or the sickly to be prescribed by Cabinet Order as provided for in Article 71-2 of the Law shall be as follows:

Classification	Degrees of Mental and Physical Deficiencies
The Blind	1. Those having eyesight of less than 0.1 with both eyes. 2. Those having eyesight of not less than 0.1 but less than 0.3, or those having an excessive impediment in visual function other than eyesight and needing education through braille or deemed to need that education in the future.
The Deaf	1. Those whose loss of hearing is 90 decibels or more with both ears. 2. Those whose loss of hearing is between 90 and 50 decibels and who find it impossible or extremely difficult to comprehend a normal voice even with the use of a hearing aid.
The Mentally retarded	1. Those whose degree of retardation in mental development is of an intermediate degree or more 2. Those whose degree of retardation in mental development is of a light degree but whose social adaptability is especially poor.
The Physically disabled	1. Those whose degree of impediment in bodily function is such as to make it impossible or difficult to support the body. 2. Those whose degree of impediment in the function of upper limbs is such as to make it impossible or difficult to write. 3. Those whose degree of impediment in the function of lower limbs is such as to make it impossible or difficult to walk. 4. Those whose degree of impediment in the function of limbs is otherwise of the same degree or greater than the preceding three items. 5. Those whose degree of impediment in the function of limbs is of less degree than each of the preceding items but of such degree as required medical observation and guidance for a period of more than six months.

12

The Sickly	1. Those whose chronic lung disease, heart disease, kidney disease, etc. is of such degree as requires medical care or regulation of living for a period of more than six months. 2. Those whose sickliness is of such degree as requires regulation of living for a period of more than six months.

Remarks:

1. Eyesight shall be measured by an eyesight testing table of the universal type, and with regard to those having irregular refraction, the measurement shall be made of the corrected eyesight.
2. Hearing shall be measured by an audiometer of the Japan Industrial Standard.

Article 71.

Schools for the blind, schools for the deaf and schools for the handicapped shall have as their aim to provide education equivalent to that of kindergarten, elementary school, lower secondary school or upper secondary school and, at the same time, to provide the necessary knowledge and skills to make up for their students' deficiencies, respectively to the blind (including the extremely weak-sighted, hereinafter considered the same) to the deaf (including the extremely hard of hearing, hereinafter considered the same) and the mentally retarded, the physically disabled or the sickly (including the constitutionally weak, hereinafter considered the same).

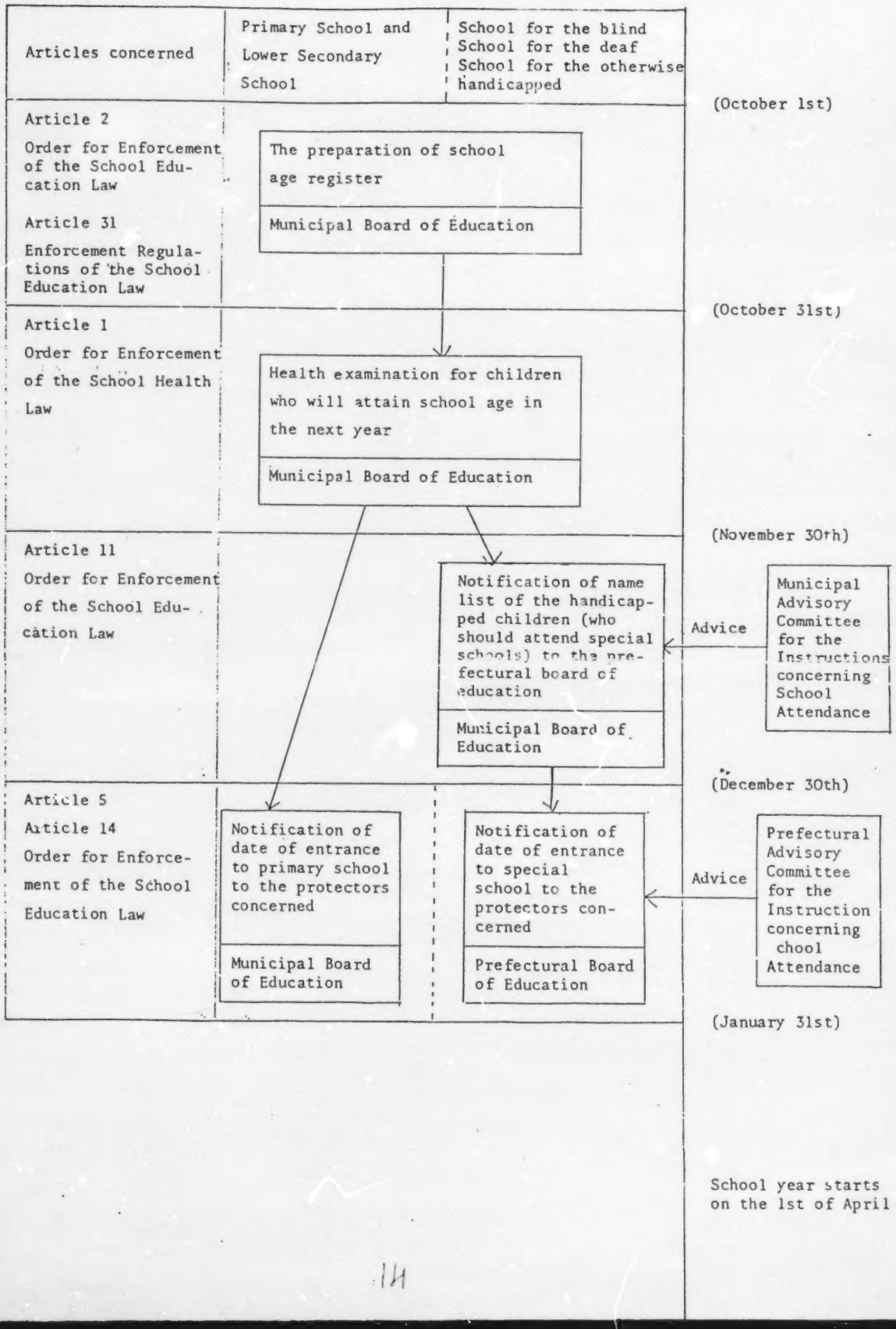
(As partially amended by Law No. 166 of 1961)

Article 71-2.

The degree of mental or physical deficiency of the blind, the deaf or the mentally retarded, the physically disabled or the sickly mentioned in the preceding Article shall be stipulated by Cabinet Order.

(As added by Law No. 166 of 1961)

Procedures for the instructions concerning school attendance


Articles concerned
Primary School and Lower Secondary School
School for the blind
School for the deaf
School for the otherwise handicapped
(October 1st)
Article 2
Order for Enforcement of the School Education Law
Article 31
Enforcement Regulations of the School Education Law
The preparation of school age register
Municipal Board of Education
(October 31st)
Article 1
Order for Enforcement of the School Health Law
Health examination for children who will attain school age in the next year
Municipal Board of Education
(November 30th)
Article 11
Order for Enforcement of the School Education Law
Notification of name list of the handicapped children (who should attend special schools) to the prefectural board of education
Municipal Board of Education
Advice
Municipal Advisory Committee for the Instructions concerning School Attendance
(December 30th)
Article 5
Article 14
Order for Enforcement of the School Education Law
Notification of date of entrance to primary school to the protectors concerned
Municipal Board of Education
Notification of date of entrance to special school to the protectors concerned
Prefectural Board of Education
Advice
Prefectural Advisory Committee for the Instruction concerning chool Attendance
(January 31st)
School year starts on the 1st of April

The Municipal and Prefectural Board of Education is guided as to the establishment and standard composition of members of the Advisory Committee for the Instructions concerning School Attendance. The Guidance concerning the standard composition of the members is as follows.

(1) Municipal Committee

Doctor ..... more than 2 persons

School teacher, Professor, etc ..... more than 7 persons

Staff of welfare facilities, etc ..... more than 1 person

(2) Prefectural Committee

Doctor ..... more than 5 persons

School teacher, Professor, etc ..... more than 7 persons

Staff of Welfare facilities ..... more than 3 persons